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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 25, 2003

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May 27, 2003

WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered showers interrupted some field activities but missed some localities, especially in the Big Bend area, during the week of May 18 through 25. Rainfall in the major cities ranged from about two tenths of an inch at Tallahassee to nearly seven inches at West Palm Beach. Temperatures for the week hovered near normal. Daytime highs were in the 80s while nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s. Several cities recorded at least one high in the 90s. Localities in western Panhandle counties received significant amounts of much-needed rain. Drier conditions over the eastern Panhandle and northern Peninsula increased the danger of wild fires with crews currently fighting a major fire caused by lightning in the Everglades south of the Tamiami Trail.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly adequate with short supplies reported for localities scattered from the Panhandle to the central Peninsula. Surplus supplies exist in some southeastern areas. Peanut and cotton planting was delayed briefly by rain and resumed late in the week. Peanut planting is 75 percent complete compared with 74 percent finished by this date for both last year and the five year average progress.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	25	13	2	15	14
Short	19	35	71	18	35	74
Adequate	70	40	16	70	50	12
Surplus	10	0	0	10	0	0

VEGETABLES: Showers hindered some picking over the southern Peninsula with most on schedule. Vegetables available include cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, potatoes, sweet corn, tomatoes, and watermelons. Harvesting is slowing seasonally for snap beans, cantaloupes, celery, cucumbers, radishes and squash.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pasture condition improved following widespread and generally heavy rainfall. Permanent pasture grass is growing well. In the northern counties, pasture condition is generally fair with rain needed. In the central areas, pasture is in fair to excellent condition following welcome rain in and around Marion County. In the south and southwest, pasture condition ranges from very poor to excellent with most in fair to good condition. Statewide, cattle are mostly in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	5	15	0	0
Fair	30	40	20	25
Good	55	35	70	70
Excellent	5	5	10	5

CITRUS: This was a very hot and humid week with several scattered rains and thunderstorms. The rains, however, did not cover all citrus growing areas. Most growers and caretakers are continuing to irrigate to maintain good tree condition during this all important time when the trees are shedding the little green fruit they cannot carry for next fruit season. Most citrus trees in the well cared for groves are in very good condition. Some young tree groves are producing a lot of new growth. Most older trees will produce their next flush of new foliage along with the summer rains. Harvest of Valencia oranges is starting to slow as supplies are running low in some areas. Several processors have closed for the season and some of the others are slowing down. Grapefruit movement is down to the last few thousand boxes. Most grapefruit packing houses have closed for the season. Very few Honey tangerines remain to be picked.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for fire protection. Growers are removing and herbiciding vines that are starting to make aggressive growth up the trees. Dead trees are being pushed and cut out in large numbers in older sour orange rootstock groves. Summer fertilizations are underway. Second and third sprays are being applied in those groves that are growing fruit for the fresh trade. Resets are being planted in most older groves with permanent irrigation. Hedging and topping are active in all areas.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	May 11	May 18	May 26
Valencia oranges	6,966,000	5,655,000	5,609,000
All grapefruit	230,000	82,000	33,000
Honey tangerines	49,000	21,000	7,000

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In cooperation with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service whose county directors participate in supplying field information.